

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
TRAILERS, OVERSIZED VEHICLES AND RV SUB-COMMITTEE
THE TORRANCE TRAFFIC COMMISSION**

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The Torrance Traffic Commission Sub-Committee convened at 6:05 p.m. on Thursday, July 14, 2005 in the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library Meeting Room.

2. **SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Ulrich.

3. **ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Lewis, Rische, and
Sub-Committee Chairperson Ulrich.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Transportation Manager Semaan,
Transportation Planning Associate Crump,
Deputy City Attorney Sullivan,
Deputy City Attorney Caceres,
Torrance Police Department Lieutenant Matsuda,
Torrance Police Department Sergeant Prins.
Torrance Police Department Officer Hernandez, and

4. **ITEMS UNDER CONSIDERATION**

4a. **ON-STREET PARKING OF TRAILERS, OVERSIZED, AND RECREATIONAL
VEHICLES**

Transportation Manager Semaan informed the public that this was the first meeting of the Traffic Commission Sub-Committee that was formed at the June 6, 2005 regular meeting of the Traffic Commission. He introduced Commissioners, staff members, and representatives from the Torrance Police Department.

Transportation Manager Semaan stated that the purpose of this and previous meetings was to address concerns regarding the parking of recreational vehicles, trailers, and oversized vehicles on public streets in the City. He advised that staff was directed by City Council to bring back their recommendations regarding the issue. He provided background on the community meetings of December 16, 2004, January 13, 2005, April 18, 2005, and May 23, 2005 as well as Traffic Commission meetings of February 7, 2005 and June 6, 2005. He discussed the proposed draft ordinance that was presented to the Traffic Commission on June 6, 2005, advising that the Commission moved to continue the item and form a sub-committee to consider RV parking restrictions. He stated that the goal of the sub-committee was to come up with workable solutions and requested that public input be limited to suggestions and

recommendations. He acknowledged that any potential solution would not be acceptable to everyone, but hoped that by addressing resident concerns a workable compromise could be developed.

Transportation Planning Associate Crump thanked residents for attending tonight's meeting, discussed suggestions that have been considered by staff, and introduced Torrance Police Department Lieutenant Matsuda who presented a new proposal for consideration.

Torrance Police Department Lieutenant Matsuda stated that proposal he was presenting took the shortage of available RV storage facilities into consideration. He stated that current owners of trailers, oversized, and recreational vehicles would be required to register their vehicles with the Community Development Department by December 31, 2005, to facilitate the creation of a data base of existing owners. Beginning January 1, 2006, only registered vehicles would be allowed to park on City streets without any new restrictions, with a leeway period until January 1, 2008. He stated that this would allow a reasonable time frame for owners to find storage for their vehicles and to anticipate and prepare for the additional cost of storage. Beginning January 1, 2008, all oversized vehicles would be prohibited from parking on public streets without a loading and unloading permit. He advised that the deadline of January 1, 2008 may need to be extended a year if storage units are still not available.

Transportation Planning Associate Crump discussed the proposed loading and unloading permit system. She stated that owners could apply by telephone for a one, two, or three-day permit that would be free of charge. She advised that applicants would be given a verification number that they could put inside their vehicles on the dashboard. She stated that the number of permits allowed would be a total of 96 permits in a calendar year, with a limit of 24 permits per quarter. She stated that out-of-town visitors with oversized vehicles would be accommodated.

She distributed a map of land use zones in the City where RV storage is allowed as well as a map of RV storage locations in the South Bay that was provided by a resident but unverified by staff. She further distributed plans of a business owner who planned to open an RV storage yard with 329 spaces that was approved by the City, noting that the applicant subsequently made the decision not to open it.

Transportation Manager Semaan stated that staff has received numerous questions and comments that were based on misunderstandings. He clarified that allowable permits would be divided into four quarters a year, not four permits per year. He discussed concerns about the dimensions of an oversized vehicle as well as exempting those vehicles that are used on a daily basis. He reiterated that staff was attempting to accommodate and address resident concerns while developing a system that would be as amenable as possible.

He explained that meetings were initiated because several Departments in the City have received numerous complaints about the number of oversized vehicles that are parked or stored on City streets, either due to esthetic or safety concerns. He advised that staff was asked by City Council to address the issue and to find a way to mitigate the problem. He stated that the 72-hour parking regulation did not provide police officers with the tools necessary to address the magnitude of the problem that we have today.

Sub-Committee Chairperson Ulrich welcomed public input and requested that residents limit their comments to meaningful suggestions and be willing to compromise to reach a viable solution.

Mike Haderas, Gramercy Avenue, (no speaker card), suggested that the wording of the 72-hour parking restriction be changed to include oversized vehicles for loading and unloading purposes only.

Robert Thompson, President of Riviera Homeowners Association, (no speaker card), stated that the current system was not working and that the Association has been unable to assist members with their concerns about RV parking on their streets.

As a private citizen and RV owner, Mr. Thompson stated that he could live with a permit system but feared that it would be inconvenient.

Randy Quan, Elgar Avenue, suggested that variances be made to allow parking of oversized vehicles on dirt on private property or to allow more concrete than is currently allowed. He noted that cars often sit for years without being moved and are not cited.

Charles Hickey, Arvada Street, commended staff for the two-tier proposal, but expressed concern that, in the City's attempt to compromise, staff would come up with unenforceable rules. He noted that people are ingenious and would find a way to exploit the system.

Mike Navarro, Elgar Avenue, recommended leaving the 72-hour parking restriction as it is and commented that the cost of RV storage was prohibitive.

Allan Broer, West 226th Street, expressed concern that even after the grace period there would be no available RV storage. He stated that development of storage facilities should take place before rules were set.

JoAnn Citrowski, Bluff Street, stated that this was the first meeting that she was aware of and that she learned about it through an RV club. She stated her opinion that complaint-driven enforcement leads to arbitrary and selective enforcement of the law and expressed concern about the loss of property rights. She stated that she was opposed to any change to the current 72-hour rule and that she could not afford to put her RV in storage.

Brian Keller, Laurette Street, questioned if officers would be able to enforce a new code if they could not enforce the current one. He suggested a compromise that only new owners be subject to a change in code and that current owners be "grand fathered" in.

Ernie Nash, 735 Border, discussed the difficulty of reversing citations and maintained that the 72-hour law was sufficient.

Serge Levesque, West 176th Street, stated that he was in favor of no changes to the current law, noting that less than 0.5% of citizens were complaining. He suggested a 24-hour time limit set for RVs parked in front of someone else's residence.

Karen K. Fitch, 236th Street, distributed copies of other Municipal Codes currently “on the books.” She questioned if a cost analysis has been done for implementing and policing any proposed change in law.

Steve Hamilton, West 172nd Street, noted that the grace period was actually two and a half years, not three years as stated by staff. He questioned the validity of complaints received and suggested that if complaints were coming from isolated areas that those areas be addressed independently. He noted that there were currently 21 storage facilities with five available units, at an average cost of \$140 per month.

In response to his inquiry, Deputy City Attorney Sullivan advised that under the proposal presented tonight, the 96 permits would include visitor permits.

Transportation Manager Semaan advised that staff would provide data on the complaints received when it becomes available. He stated that he hoped to provide a City map, with locations of complaints plotted, at the August 1, 2005 Commission meeting.

Sub-Committee Chairperson Ulrich thanked resident Karen Galvin for providing a similar service of listing local storage locations.

Pinito Parra, Maricopa Place, stated that he uses his RV every day and stressed the importance of communication between neighbors.

Sheila Ton, Talisman Street, commented that these meetings have not been sufficiently advertised. She stated that RV owners should be allowed to have unlimited three-day parking permits, noting that many RV owners are seniors and are on a strict income. She recommended increased enforcement of the current 72-hour restriction instead of penalizing RV owners.

Mark Applegate, Reynosa Drive, suggesting providing permits over the Internet and that weekends be made exempt from permits.

Jackie Thornton, West 183rd Street, questioned how permits could be obtained during nighttime hours. She recommended better enforcement of the current 72-hour parking restriction and targeting only those areas where complaints are received.

Debbie Overbey, Darien Street, concurred with Ms. Thornton and questioned how a permit system would be monitored and enforced. She stated that 24 permits per quarter was unfair, and that 96 permits annually would be preferable. She questioned if the policy of no-fee permits was guaranteed in future years.

Transportation Manager Semaan advised that there were no guarantees and that City Council has the ability to change any law in the Municipal Code.

Al Stahl, 183rd Street, stated his belief that the 72-hour parking restriction can be enforced, that the proposed permit system apply to new vehicle owners only, and that the Building Department allow concrete pads to be poured on private property for the purpose of storing oversized vehicles.

Bob Nordhoff, Eriel Avenue, stated that he pays \$175 per month to store his RV and that the 72-hour restriction is sufficient; however, he suggested it be changed to require vehicles to be moved several feet after 72 hours instead of only one or two inches. He commented that the method of informing citizens of public meetings left a lot to be desired.

Floyd Heideman, Teri Avenue, stated that the 72-hour rule was enforceable, noting that many cars are also stored on the street. He stated that the proposal was aimed at a very small segment of the population. He questioned if he would be cited for running errands because he uses his RV as a second vehicle and often cannot park in parking lots.

Ron Kirby, Torrance Boulevard, suggested that the City supply land for RV storage, questioned how long proposed permits would be free, and stressed that the 72-hour law should be better enforced.

Terrance, Middlebrook Road, (no speaker card), stated that there was sufficient property available in the City for RV storage. He stated that the larger problem was trailers and boats that were not hooked up to vehicles.

David Nakatani, Middlebrook Road, advised that many people drive motor homes into the City to work.

Harvey Hetrick, Cranbrook Avenue, suggested that perhaps there really was not a problem and that "boots" be put on abandoned vehicles.

The sub-committee was in recess from 7:50 p.m. to 8:05 p.m.

Torrance Police Department Lieutenant Matsuda discussed the 72-hour ordinance as it is currently written, noting that many vehicles that appear to be stationary are in fact moved. He stated that there were presently five parking enforcement officers in the City.

Michael Tarzia, Carlow Road, suggested that detached vehicles be allowed on public streets for no more than 24 or 48 hours.

Karen Galvin, Iris Avenue, commended staff for developing the best proposal she has heard in several months. She suggested that verifications have start and end dates. She stated that the problem of out-of-town visitors needed to be addressed and explained that she often has to detach to use her vehicle.

Martha Kihano, Hinsdale Avenue, (no speaker card) suggested that the City provide RV storage on City property or approach Exxon/Mobil with a proposal to lease or donate land, with fees collected by renters to cover insurance costs. She commented that RV usage is increasing and that Torrance needs to be more RV-friendly.

Amy Newhaus, Pennsylvania Avenue, (no speaker card), stated that she would need permits for a week at a time and also suggested that the City provide affordable RV storage.

Marjorie Shor, Torrance Boulevard, questioned how far a vehicle could be parked from a stop sign, expressing concern about obstructed visibility. She pointed out the necessity of including emergency provisions in any proposal.

Donovan Norris, (address not provided), suggested that RVs be allowed to park on Dalemead Street, that the City purchase land to provide RV storage, or that the City negotiate parking accommodations in the business district.

Alex Viana, West 244th Street, suggested lobbying business owners to provide storage space, with the possibility of offering them a tax incentive. He suggested that the problem was not as big as it seems and that perhaps nothing should be done.

John Aguiar, Dalemead Street, suggested that solutions and suggestions be sent via e-mail to the Department and Commission.

Dee Hardison, 236th Street, stated that complaints regarding RV parking are legitimate and have been ongoing for at least 20 years. She suggested changing the code to allow the paving of side yards. She stated that she did not mind registering her RV but feared that a permit system would be cumbersome. She stated that she did not think that the City should get involved in the business of renting storage space. She stated that the 72-hour rule was forcing owners to move their vehicles in front of other people's homes, which was in turn causing the complaints.

Dennis Frandsen, Elm Avenue, stated that the administrative process of handling permits would not be workable and that many complaints received about 72-hour violators were also directed at cars.

Gregory Staggs, Maricopa Street, expressed concern about the size of his van conversion. He suggested that RV owners not park in front of anyone else's home and took issue with any change in the law.

Deputy City Attorney Sullivan advised that size limitations in the proposal were 22 feet long, seven feet wide, and eight feet high.

John Sesto, Glenburn Avenue, stated that he received information from the City Clerk's office that 524 complaints were filed against the same license plate number. He suggested that the City provide RV storage to help solve the problem.

Bill Yates, Madison Street, contended that storage rates would increase if the proposed ordinance was passed, and that more officers would be needed to enforce a permit system.

Wendy Williams, West 218th Street, voiced support for staff for arriving at the proposal although she stated that she could not support a permit system. She expressed concern about the lack of storage facilities and land as well as the validity of complaints received. She suggested the formation of neighborhood watch or arbitration programs and that a sixth enforcement officer be solely put on RV patrol.

Helen Soesbe, Loftyview, expressed concern about excessive City government trying to mandate RV usage, that storage costs were not affordable, and that a possible

solution was to issue permits allowing owners to park their vehicles in front of their own homes. She noted that complaints came from less than 1% of the population.

Transportation Manager Semaan advised that notifications about future meetings would be sent to those individuals who request it, and provided the Department's e-mail address: cddtraffic@tornet.com. He announced the next Traffic Commission meeting on August 1, 2005 in City Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioner Lewis stated that residents should not expect RV lots to become available in the City because it was not an economically viable business venture. He further stated that he did not anticipate Exxon/Mobil or Torrance Airport to provide space for RV storage due to fears of terrorism and liability. He noted the many residents opposed to RV parking on City streets who were not present tonight, advising that complaints come in more ways than just through the Police Department.

Commissioner Rische stated that Torrance was addressing the issue of RV parking very late in the game and was in a minority of cities that has not passed an ordinance. He discussed regulations in other cities including the City of Bakersfield. He noted that RV owners were a minority. He acknowledged that a permit system would be cumbersome and suggested that the Torrance Police Department enter a crash program of super enforcement of the current 72-hour law. He related his observation of abandoned vehicles in his own neighborhood, and expressed his regret that many residents were paying heavily due to a minority that disregards the law. He suggested that RV owners get together to form an organization, maintain a political interest, and ask City Council why some land could not be zoned for RV parking instead of for developments.

Sub-Chairperson Ulrich thanked residents, staff, and Torrance police officers for their input tonight. He maintained that ground was broken and that several valid suggestions were relayed by residents.

5. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:58 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to August 1, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. at the City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

Approved as Submitted December 5, 2005 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
